

Message Text

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ACTION TRSE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 OIC-02 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, IBRD, IMF, CE

SUBJ: WORLD BANK/IMF ANNUAL MEETINGS

REF: STATE 184669

1. UPON RECEIPT OF REFTEL, EMBOFF TELEPHONED DR. LAL JAYAWARDENE, PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, TO ASK FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS SRI LANKA'S PLANS FOR THE SUBJECT MEETING. JAYAWARDENE SAID THE SRI LANKAN DELEGATION WOULD BE HEADED BY FINANCE MINISTER RONNIE DE MEL AND SECONDED BY CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR HERBERT TENNEKON. JAYAWARDENE WOULD BE THE THIRD PERSON ON THE DELEGATION AND ONE OR TWO PEOPLE FROM THE SRI LANKA EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WOULD BE INCLUDED.

2. JAYAWARDENE SAID WITH A NEW GSL HAVING COME INTO POWER ON JULY 22, NO ONE HAS REALLY FOCUSED ON THE BANK/FUND MEETINGS. HE PROMISED TO MEET WITH EMBOFF WHEN HE KNEW WHAT ISSUES THE SRI LANKAN DELEGATION MIGHT RAISE IN PLENARY SESSION, WITH BANK/FUND OFFICIALS, OR WITH US DELEGATION. AS OF AUGUST 17 JAYAWARDENE WAS NOT READY TO DISCUSS SRI LANKA'S POSITION.

3. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT MINISTER DE MEL WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS AT STATE AND TREASURY AND WITH AID

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ADMINISTRATOR GILLIGAN DURING THE SEPTEMBER 26-29 PERIOD. DE MEL AND JAYAWARDENE PLAN TO LEAVE WASHINGTON FOR NEW YORK ON SEPTEMBER 30 AND STAY UNTIL OCTOBER 4. EMBOFF EXPLAINED THAT SENIOR USG OFFICIALS WILL BE PARTICULARLY BUSY DURING PERIOD OF THE MEETINGS AND IF MINISTER DE MEL COULD STAY IN WASHINGTON A FEW DAYS LONGER IT MIGHT BE EASIER TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS. JAYAWARDENE WAS NONCOMMITAL ABOUT CHANGING

THEIR TRAVEL PLANS.

4. THE RECENT ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN CENTERED ON THE ECONOMIC ISSUES OF INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. THE NEW GSL HAS MADE SWEEPING PROMISES TO CUT THE COST OF LIVING AND TO GET THE ECONOMY MOVING. TO THIS END, THE SRI LANKAN DELEGATION WILL NO DOUBT BE LOOKING FOR INCREASED ASSISTANCE FROM MULTI-LATERAL AND BILATERAL AID DONORS.

5. THE AMBASSADOR WILL BE MEETING WITH THE NEW FINANCE MINISTER EARLY NEXT WEEK. FOLLOWING THAT MEETING, THE EMBASSY WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO REPORT ON SRI LANKAN THINKING WITH REGARD TO THE BANK/FUND MEETINGS AND TO SUGGEST ISSUES THE US DELEGATION SHOULD RAISE.
WRIGGINS

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